



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTIES OF BUTTE, GLENN AND TEHAMA

SELF HELP ASSISTANCE & REFERRAL PROGRAM

1675 Montgomery Street • Oroville, CA 95965 • (530) 532-7015

655 Oleander • Chico, CA 95926 • (530) 532-7024

526 W. Sycamore Street • Willows, CA 95988 • (530) 934-6461

345 Pine Street • Red Bluff, CA 96080 • (530) 527-8649

Column #4

ASK THE COURT

Question: I am unemployed and have no financial resources. Why won't the court appoint an attorney to help me with my divorce?

--Michael, Willows, CA.

Answer: The United States and California Constitutions and laws permit a court-appointed attorney for people facing felony or misdemeanor charges in a criminal case. Divorce is a civil action, rather than criminal; therefore, you are not entitled to an attorney at the public's expense.

In civil cases, it is your right to find and hire an attorney to help you with your case if you so choose. Many attorneys will allow clients to pay on pay plans or a reduced monthly fee until the debt is paid in full. It is best to be up front with any attorney you are considering hiring, describing your situation so that you can work out acceptable payment arrangements.

If you choose to represent yourself and not use an attorney for help, you must do all legal preparation and research, document filing and serving, and presentation of evidence on your own. When in court, the judge, court staff, or any lawyers in the courtroom will not be available to help you.

If you do decide to pursue your divorce without an attorney, you may contact the Self Help Assistance and Referral Program (SHARP), part of the Superior Court of California- Counties of Glenn, Butte, and Tehama. They can help you complete the legal documents and understand the divorce process. They will not represent you in court or give you any advice. For more information, call the Willows office at (530) 934-6446, ext. 6461; the Red Bluff office at (530) 527-8649; the Oroville office at (530) 532-7015; or the Chico office at (530) 532-7024. --Glenn County Superior Court Administration

Do you have questions that you want the Court to answer? Please email them to askthecourt@glenncourt.ca.gov or mail them to Glenn County Superior Court, Attn: Ask the Court, 526 W. Sycamore Street, Willows, CA 95988. Questions may be submitted anonymously. Donald Cole Byrd is the current Presiding Judge of the court.